DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 111 074 EA 007 443

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TITLE Political Processes for an Interagency Project Renewal Policy: A Case Study of a Federal Agency's Negotiations to Influence State and Local Policies.
PUB DATE Apr 75
NOTE 21p.; Not available in hard copy due to marginal reproducibility of original document; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (60th, Washington, D.C., March 30-April 3, 1975)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Adoption (Ideas); *Case Studies (Education); *Curriculum Development; Diffusion; Educational Change; Educational Innovation; Educational Policy; Elementary Education; Experimental Curriculum; *Federal Programs; *Interagency Cooperation
IDENTIFIERS Developmental Arts Program

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the six-month negotiation process of a federally funded program to renew an interagency curriculum diffusion project with a state department of education and nine school districts. Because of interagency dissension during the first project year, the federal agency made concessions to obtain project renewal policies. Federal concessions recognized state and local jurisdiction in high-risk policy areas. The federal agency dictated neither the process of state and local program development nor the expenditure of moneys for curriculum purchase. Changing state and local policies was more rapid than changing educational practices. (Author)

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POLITICAL PROCESSES FOR AN INTERAGENCY PROJECT RENEWAL POLICY: A CASE STUDY OF A FEDERAL AGENCY'S NEGOTIATIONS TO INFLUENCE STATE AND LOCAL POLICIES

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A Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, D.C., April, 1975. (School of Education, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Va., 1975)

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POLITICAL PROCESSES FOR AN INTERAGENCY PROJECT RENEWAL POLICY: A CASE STUDY OF A FEDERAL AGENCY'S NEGOTIATIONS TO INFLUENCE STATE AND LOCAL POLICIES

Few studies have analyzed the political procedures used by a federally-funded program to influence state and local educational policies through interagency projects.[1] Increasing use of interagency projects to implement federal educational policies is a reality of the 1970's. This paper analyzes the Developmental Arts Program's six-month negotiation process to renew a curriculum evaluation and diffusion project with the Central State Department of Education and nine school districts.[2] Both the political process leading to project renewal and the federal influence on state and local policies are analyzed.

Information was collected through ethnohistorical procedures for a summative evaluation report of the curriculum and the project.[3] The Investigator, an Evaluation Associate at the sponsoring national educational laboratory from July, 1971, through February, 1973, was assigned to evaluate the Developmental Arts Program's interagency project. The Investigator made detailed observation field records of the participants' actions in informal and formal situations at the federal, state and local agencies. She systematically collected and analyzed each agency's "working papers", official documents and informal interagency documents.[4]

THE DAP INTERAGENCY PROJECT

The Developmental Arts Program (hereafter DAP) was a feuerally-funded program established at a midwestern national educational laboratory in 1967. Its official mission was to develop a new arts curriculum for classroom use for "improving educational practices and solving educational problems of national significance."[5] The DAP's constituency was the national educational community and their institutions. The clients were children and adults in educational programs.

The new curriculum was an integrated multi-arts approach for general education. It synthesized learning activities drawn from drama, film, music, art, literature and dance. The curriculum was to be used in the general education of all pupils by the elementary teachers and as a resource for school arts program development by the arts specialists. This approach to arts education differed radically from the usual pattern of separate art and music courses taught by itinerate specialists.

The DAP developed 10 of a projected 40 curriculum packages from 1968 to 1972 and originally planned curriculum evaluation for 1972-73. As a specialized educational agency to develop curriculum, the DAP had no legal access to schools to obtain evaluation sites nor had they concentrated on influencing local curriculum adoption and purchase policies. The DAP had discussed with the Central State Department of Education (hereafter CDE) the possibility of establishing an interagency curriculum evaluation and diffusion project for the 1972-73 school year. Because of increasing competition to obtain federal contracts, the DAP decided to initiate the five-year project

a year early. In doing so, the DAP assumed two risks: delivering 10 curriculum packages a year earlier than planned and the lack of wide-spread CDE support for curriculum diffusion. However, the DAP took reasonable precautions to minimize these risks.

The project was to be implemented during the 1971-72 school year. The CDE officially adopted the curriculum for state program development and selected nine districts to serve as evaluation sites. The nine districts also officially adopted the curriculum.[6] However, they did not purchase the curriculum materials because DAP provided the packages cost-free for evaluation purposes.

Interagency cooperation depended on an exchange of anticipated project benefits. The DAP could demonstrate to federal officials that a state department of education and nine districts had adopted the curriculum. The DAP also obtained evaluation sites and a possible state market. The CDE anticipated fulfilling a gubernatorial platform, extending the state Quality Educational Program, and establishing new teacher education programs. The nine districts expected 10 cost-free curriculum packages, recognition for participating in the project, and extension of local educational programs.

To obtain these benefits, each agency agreed to provide project services. The DAP would provide 10 packages per school, a project coordinator and two curriculum evaluators. The CDE would disseminate the curriculum throughout the state, supervise district demonstration sites, support new teacher education programs and aid districts in curriculum purchase. The nine districts agreed to develop new arts programs, demonstrate the curriculum to other districts and purchase the curriculum for district-wide diffusion. In essence, the DAP was responsible for curriculum delivery and

evaluation and the state and local officials were responsible for promoting state-wide curriculum adoption and purchase.

These policies were formalized in two documents. The CDE drew up an official five-year curriculum diffusion plan for public consumption.[7] But the DAP's "Memorandum of Understandings", signed by the chief executive officer of each agency, clearly delineated the exchange of services among the project agencies.[8] In addition, the "Memorandum" specified that during the five-year project, interagency policies were subject to annual review and revision based on the "availability of funds" and "prior performance of the parties".

The project was only partially implemented the first year. Although the DAP provided most of the services it promised, it was unable to deliver the cost-free curriculum. Instead of delivering five curriculum packages in September and five more in January to each district as originally planned, a total of five packages was delivered on a staggered basis throughout the year. The irregular delivery of the packages created difficulties for the state and local agencies.

Implementing the project caused unanticipated problems for the nine districts. The packages were used as they arrived, but other project services were not provided. Most districts did not develop arts education programs and postponed demonstrations to visitors. Districts did not plan to purchase the curriculum. Local officials could not justify curriculum purchase when School Boards had "tight money" policies and local communities considered arts education unnecessary. In essence, to provide the services called for in the project would have required major changes in local educational policies.

The CDE, especially the sponsoring Fine Arts Division, did not become actively involved in the project. The CDE did not aid in establishing district arts education programs, demonstration sites, or new teacher education programs. The Commissioner would not publicly promote curriculum diffusion until after the Fine Arts Division agreed to actively support the project. Few of the some 500 Central State districts were aware of the curriculum. However, a Fine Arts Advisor, with the Commissioner's approval, organized a state Title III arts education project to diffuse the curriculum to 12 or 18 more districts. When project difficulties occurred, state priorities took precedent. Curriculum diffusion was secondary to CDE internal reorganization following changes in state government officials.

Despite unanticipated problems and partial implementation of the project, each agency received benefits from the project. Unanticipated benefits became more important than those planned. By spring, the project had become an opportunity for federal, state and local agencies to resolve unexpected internal and/or external problems. For example, the DAP used the official state department plan as a model for national diffusion. The project districts used the new arts curriculum to improve existing language programs. A few districts saw the project as an opportunity to obtain CDE approval of locally-initiated Title III projects. The state department used the project to extend the Commissioner's influence for state department reorganization and state program development. The Fine Arts Division legitimized a long-standing request for a Divisional budget.

The DAP began negotiations for revision of project policies with the participating agencies half way through the first year. If an agency felt that it could continue its participation with minimal disruption to its own

programs, then it was willing to consider participating a second year. However, each agency hoped to acquire more benefits and supply fewer services under the new policies. At issue were the conditions under which each agency would participate.

DAP NEGOTIATION PROCESSES AND COMPROMISES

From January to June, 1972, DAP negotiated with state and local officials. The Project Coordinator periodically visited the nine districts and the DAP Director negotiated with the CDE officials at the state capital. After the DAP and CDE made project decisions for the second year, the Project Coordinator concluded the final arrangements with the districts. Local policy was stated in a second "Memorandum of Understandings". State policy was formalized in the Title III Arts Education Project.[9]

The Project Coordinator first talked with state and local officials and discovered that most agencies were dissatisfied with the project. The curriculum was delivered late and incomplete. The project caused dissension within each agency and between the agency and its particular constituencies. For example, within schools and the state department, disagreements occurred over the future direction of arts education. The curriculum was for elementary teachers, not the arts specialists. Should multi-arts education be integrated into the general education of all pupils as part of the daily curriculum or should art and music be separate courses? Most communities still considered art and music as educational "frills" distinctly separated from general education. State associations of arts educators and elementary principals considered arts education as a curriculum area of the specialists. Project agencies did not want to take unnecessary policy-making risks by

raising certain curriculum issues. Early identification of these policy-making risks influenced DAP negotiation procedures.

By spring, DAP sought three changes in project policies. First, DAP wanted rapid state-wide curriculum diffusion. Although approximately 250 sets of packages had been purchased outside of the Central State, none had been purchased within the state. Promoting state-wide curriculum purchase would require CDE support or else more DAP investments. Second, the DAP wanted to decrease its project costs the second year and withdraw from the project by the third year. The project operated in only one state and the DAP needed to shift its resources to national diffusion. Original plans envisioned state and local agencies eventually maintaining the project. DAP now wanted this done. Finally, the DAP wanted to retain the nine districts as curriculum evaluation sites. Because of state and local dissatisfaction with the project, DAP's effort to negotiate new policies more favorable to itself became difficult.

DAP negotiations with state and local officials followed a general pattern. First, there was an understanding to avoid concentrating on past failures. Second, both parties reached quick agreement on non-controversial policies. Third, both parties recognized problems which could not be readily resolved. Fourth, both parties deliberately tabled the most controversial issues until the areas of "permissible negotiation"[10] were established through consensus. The areas of permissible negotiation were those problems whose resolution called for compromise. To demonstrate this process, I will use the negotiations between DAP and CDE officials.[11] This process occurred in the preliminary discussions on the evening of May 23rd and were continued

in the official conference with the Commissioner of Education and the Fine Arts Division the following morning.

The preliminary discussions were between the DAP Director, Dr. Baskins, four laboratory officials and Mr. Carson, the CDE Advisor who had organized the state project. These discussions established the areas of permissible negotiation between the federal and state agency. Dr. Baskins and Mr. Carson also made plans for the morning conference to facilitate decision-making.

First, both DAP and CDE officials readily admitted "failure in certain obligations". Dr. Baskins began with "we admit that we haven't gotten the packages here and this has created problems." Mr. Carson said, "If our posture had been more supportive during the year, but there were good reasons. . . . We are now ready for a commitment." This set the tone of good faith and reasonableness between the two officials.

Curriculum evaluation, a non-controversial issue, was quickly resolved. The summary observation demonstrates this.

> Very early in the discussion, the Evaluation Director described survey evaluation procedures and listed the deadlines for data collection. Mr. Carson was still eating his salad and he was listening more for politeness that real concern. Dr. Baskins said, "We want to go survey in Central State". Mr. Carson merely nodded his head in agreement. 5/23

Teacher education was identified as a problem which could not be resolved. Both the DAP and CDE viewed the colleges as "high risks" in the project. Dr. Baskins argued for "writing off" the colleges because of little teacher education program development. Mr. Carson suggested other alternatives. Both officials viewed teacher education as a long-term goal and "a large pay-off objective" but there was no resolution of this issue.

The discussion moved to defining areas of permissible negotiation. Dr. Baskins said "we have spent $100,000 in Central State and we need a pay-off. Other states where there has been no huge DAP investments are buying packages. Title III monies are not much of a pay-off. If the CDE does not want to continue the project, there are other states to be developed." At this suggestion of DAP withdrawal, Mr. Carson quickly answered, "It's too early! First we had to get our internal affairs within the CDE straightened out." Dr. Baskins pressed with a direct question, "Where is your support?"

Mr. Carson said, "If you approach it this way, the issue can become very clear and the Commissioner would be in an awkward position. The Commissioner is committed to arts education and yet if Dr. Eddy, one of his strongest members in his Bureau, loses face . . . it is very awkward for both men." Mr. Carson pointed out that Dr. Eddy, the Fine Arts Division Coordinator, was influential enough to form a coalition of the separate arts specialists associations and the elementary principals associations if he felt the educational issue was significant. Such a coalition actively opposing the new arts curriculum would slow curriculum adoption and purchase policies. Mr. Carson offered an alternative plan - the project coordinator would be a CDE official and the state would provide more monies for curriculum diffusion through the Title III Arts Education Project. Dr. Baskins did not respond to this offer.

Fourth, the most controversial issues were identified and tabled early in the meeting. A summary observation describes the situation.

> The Evaluation Specialist brought up the issue of how long DAP would stay in Central State in relation to developing

> a five-year curriculum evaluation plan. No one responded. The Evaluation Director asked how many packages would be in Central State for survey evaluation. It was vaguely responded to by Dr. Baskins. No one followed it up as if they sensed this was not the time to discuss it.
>
> (OBS: No one asked the ultimate question. How many packages would eventually be delivered if the project continued for four, three or two years? Nothing, of course, was said about deliver deadlines.) 5/23

The issues were: 1) DAP withdrawal from the project and 2) the number of cost-free packages the DAP would provide the nine project schools. Serious negotiations on these issues occurred privately between Dr. Baskins and Mr. Carson.

The next morning, the DAP officials met with the Commissioner and the five-member Fine Arts Division (hereafter FAD). During this official conference, FAD support for curriculum diffusion was reached through consensus. Consensus was achieved through several planned procedures. First, Mr. Carson set the agenda and directed the discussion. The Commissioner's support for the project and the presence of five laboratory officials gave credence to Mr. Carson's arguments for CDE involvement in curriculum diffusion. Each agency presented a "united front" to the other agency. The Laboratory staff appeared united in their desire to have the CDE support curriculum diffusion. FAD factionalism over the curriculum was minimized to encourage DAP continued investment in the project and to get the Commissioner's approval for a Divisional budget. One phase of negotiations was identifying weak links in curriculum diffusion plans. The FAD became increasingly aware of possible opposition groups such as the state associations of the separate arts specialists and the elementary principals. FAD consensus partially resulted from an awareness of the political implications

of curriculum diffusion. Dr. Eddy, the FAD Coordinator, switched his position from one of suspicion of the new arts curriculum to one of endorsing the new arts curriculum for general education. DAP and CDE officials expected the other FAD Advisors to follow the lead of Dr. Eddy.

During the conference, the DAP argued for increased CDE responsibility for curriculum diffusion and made concessions by offering more project services than it desired. DAP agreed to 1) share the costs of project coordination, 2) provide a fall workshop for the combined DAP-CDE projects, 3) deliver 12 cost-free packages, and 4) evaluate the combined projects. These DAP concessions were made for maximum funding for the state Title III project, FAD support for curriculum diffusion, and an informal understanding that the CDE would maintain the project the third year. DAP compromises recognized state jurisdiction in state program development. The agreements which the DAP sought and obtained from the CDE and the concessions which the DAP made are summarized in Figure 1.

Insert Figure 1

About Here

The DAP sought two agreements from the nine project districts: continuation as an evaluation site and district purchase of the curriculum. In the January visits, the Project Coordinator discussed only the DAP need for evaluation sites. The districts agreed to serve as evaluation sites in exchange for the cost-free packages and recognition from participating in the project. However, no districts were planning to purchase the curriculum

DAP Agreements Sought from CDE	DAP Agreements Obtained from CDE	DAP Concessions and Compromises
1. Increased CDE and Divisional support for DAP diffusion	1. a) Diffusion to 18 new districts through Title III project b) Divisional support for DAP diffusion	1. Delivery of 12 cost-free packages per project school
2. Limit number of cost-free packages to 10 per project school	2. Limited number of cost-free packages to 12 per project school	2. Shared project coordination costs
3. Limit DAP participation in the project to 2 years	3. State department to maintain project the third year	3. Survey evaluation for combined DAP-CDE projects
4. CDE assumes project coordination costs	4. Shared DAP-CDE project coordination costs	4. Conduct fall workshop for 27 districts in combined DAP-CDE projects
5. CDE endorses DAP survey evaluation for DAP project	5. State endorses survey evaluation for combined DAP-CDE projects	5. Recognition of state jurisdiction in state program development
6. CDE provide expert aid for local district program development	6. Shared DAP-CDE costs in aiding local program development (DAP workshop; CDE Intermediate Units)	

FIGURE 1 - DAP-CDE AGREEMENTS FOR PROJECT RENEWAL FOR THE SECOND YEAR

nor planned to implement a new arts education program. Thus, in the June negotiations with the districts, the DAP compromised. Instead of seeking arts education program development and district curriculum purchase, the Project Coordinator encouraged local innovation in package usage. This was done by offering concessions, some of which resulted from the DAP-CDE negotiations. The DAP offered: 1) a total of 12 cost-free packages per project school, 2) survey evaluation which would be less disruptive to districts, 3) a workshop for district administrators to encourage usage of the curriculum, and 4) a half-time Project Coordinator. These DAP concessions recognized local jurisdiction in program development and curriculum purchase. The agreements which the DAP sought and obtained from the project districts and the concessions DAP made are summarized in Figure 2.

Insert Figure 2

About Here

To summarize, DAP negotiation processes were similar with both state and local agencies. The DAP first gathered information from state and local officials. This was done in the Project Coordinator's mid-year visits and supplemented with the data periodically gathered by the Evaluators. Based on this information, DAP set its negotiation goals. Each agency sought benefits from the project which directly promoted its educational program and indirectly promoted the DAP's goals. State and local agencies particularly wanted to avoid making high risk policies.

Both informal preliminary discussions and official conferences were held in the May negotiations. DAP avoided concentrating on past failures

DAP Agreements Sought From Districts	DAP Agreements Obtained From Districts	DAP Concessions and Compromises
1. Evaluation site	1. Evaluation site	1. Deliver a total of 12 cost-free packages per package school
2. District diffusion	2. Planned innovation with DAP packages during second project year	2. Survey evaluation procedures 3. Conduct fall workshop for 27 districts in combined DAP-CDE projects 4. Half-time Project Coordinator provided by DAP and CDE 5. Recognition of local jurisdiction in program development and curriculum purchase

FIGURE 2 - DAP-DISTRICT AGREEMENTS FOR PROJECT RENEWAL FOR THE SECOND YEAR

such as delayed curriculum delivery, lack of local in-service training or minimal state department involvement. Participants reached quick agreement on non-controversial issues such as continuing the project and evaluation. The DAP recognized problems which could not be readily resolved, such as local in-service training for arts program development and teacher education programs. The most controversial issues were either not discussed or tabled until areas of permissible negotiation were established through consensus. For example, the Project Coordinator did not negotiate with local officials for district purchase of the curriculum but did discuss multiple uses of the packages. Dr. Baskins did not discuss DAP withdrawal until after the CDE reached consensus to support curriculum diffusion and to begin maintaining the project.

DAP interagency policy-making processes were ones of negotiation and bargaining over project benefits and services. The project was renewed because DAP made concessions in areas of state and local high risk policies. These policies were the very ones which involved each agency's constituencies and existing programs, personnel and facilities. DAP concessions contained interagency dissension within the project. DAP compromises recognized state and local jurisdiction in program development and curriculum purchase policies. In essence, state and local agencies would determine how, when, and the extent of curriculum diffusion.

INFLUENCE OF THE PROJECT ON STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES

The DAP project influenced the state and local educational policies more than it did educational practices. The DAP mission was to change educational practices through a researched and highly developed curriculum. Presumably,

a research-based curriculum was of higher quality and more efficient than local curriculums based on experience in a particular school.

The instructional activities of the new arts curriculum reflected the educational values stated in the curriculum rationale. For example, pupils learned to enjoy arts activities involving rhythm, visual arts, dramatic stories, and work images. Students consciously used body movements, voice pitch, facial expressions, and art creations as a means of self-expression. Pupils developed their analytical and judgmental abilities in the arts. Pupils initiated and directed their own learning activities. Students learned to respect the art works of others and to cooperate in group activities.

These activities contrasted sharply with some traditional educational practices. Examples of traditional practices were: the teacher is the source of knowledge and director of pupils' learning, skills are mastered through drills and recitations, "quiet" pupils are "good" students, and reading, writing and arithmetic are more important than the arts. The introduction of the new curriculum in most project districts challenged the existing educational practices and the values reflected in these practices.

The DAP did not assume that district adoption of the curriculum would immediately change educational practices. The curriculum was a resource for arts education program development. The DAP provided several services to aid in arts program development. The curriculum intent was explained at project orientation meetings. The DAP provided cost-free packages. Although the Project Coordinator was not a teaching expert, he did understand the curriculum intent and tried to guide teachers. School visitations by the Project Coordinator and Evaluators encouraged package usage.

Despite these DAP actions, the curriculum was incidentally and sporadically implemented. Because of the delayed package delivery and teacher confusion, the curriculum was seldom used as intended. From the DAP's viewpoint, the curriculum was used to improve local programs instead of changing arts educational practices. As the Project Coordinator said, "All of the schools are so different and the people are different . . . There seems to be limits as to what an outsider can do in trying to help the teacher or motivate the teacher."

Yet, some educational practices were modified. Most district officials were aware that general arts education differed from art and music lessons. The packages has an instructional integrity and district officials consistently recognized that pupils were learning something important. Changing educational practices through arts program development was a slow process geared to local educational values and situational constraints.

Changing state and local educational policies occurred more rapidly than changing educational practices. The state department of education officially adopted the curriculum for the duration of the project. The CDE Credential Bureau now accepted 24 hours of in-service work in arts education. The state Title III project diffused the curriculum to 18 other districts and mandated these districts to use the curriculum for arts program development and to share the costs of curriculum purchase. Curriculum diffusion through an interagency project was highly dependent on the political processes within each agency and between the project agencies. As one CDE official said, "It's slow. It's not as fast moving as giving birth."

APPROACHES TO EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

Ronald Havelock suggests three orientations to educational change: 1) system self-renewal, 2) social interaction, and 3) research, development and diffusion (RD and D). Each orientation contains assumptions about the innovation and the user and borrows from different traditions. DAP was eclectic in their choice of strategies and used tactics from all three orientations. Yet no single orienation captures the essence of DAP skill in policy-making. Havelock suggests that in the late 1960's, "we are witnessing the rebirth of conflict and crisis models of innovation, and although these have not been fully articulated, they may soon receive the same formalization and elaboration that distinguishes the preceding three."[13] One tactic which distinguishes this orientation in "negotiation" which Havelock defines as including not only discussion but also procedures to equalize power relations through genuine give-and-take bargaining. This study demonstrates the processes of an educational agency to minimize conflict and crisis in program development and interagency policy-making. The DAP negotiated to contain interagency dissension within the project and to influence project renewal policies. DAP offered concessions and made compromises in high risk policy areas to avoid potential conflict situations. Negotiation and bargaining processes best explain interagency project renewal policies.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Separate federal, state, and local agencies have been studied. For example, see S. Bailey and E. Mosher, ESEA: The Office of Education Administers a Law; P. Meranto, The Politics of Federal Aid to Education in 1965; S. Bailey, et. al., Schoolmen and Politics; N. Masters, et. al., State Politics and the Public Schools; R. Kimbrough, Political Power and Educational Decision-making; D. Rogers, 110 Livingston Street: Politics and Bureaucracy in the New York City School System. However, none of these studies have focused on the influence of federal policy through an interagency project.

[2]All proper names have been changed for purposes of confidentiality.

[3]See L.M. Smith and S. Schumacher, Extended Pilot Trials of the Developmental Arts Program: A Qualitative Description, Analysis and Evaluation (Midwest State: Laboratory, Inc., 1972)

[4]Methodological justification and procedures are explained in more detail in Chapter 2 of S. Schumacher, "Political Processes in Education: A Case Study of an Interagency Curriculum Evaluation and Diffusion Project" (Doctoral dissertation, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo., 1975)

[5]M. Boyan, Director of Educational Laboratories, "Problems and Issues in Knowledge Production on Utilization". In T. Eidell and J. Kitchel, eds., Knowledge Production and Utilization in Educational Administration, p. 25 (Eugene, Oregon, University of Oregon, 1968)

[6]Adoption in this paper refers to official approval of curriculums for instructional use. Diffusion refers to both adoption and purchase of curriculums.

[7]A Department of Education Plan for the Establishment of a Pilot Developmental Arts Education Program in Cooperation with Selected Schools, a Laboratory, and Other Interested Agencies. (Central State Department of Education, January, 1971)

[8]"Memorandum of Understandings" of Central State Pilot Developmental Arts Education Program. Laboratory, Inc., n.d.

[9]Developmental Arts Program, Phase II, Title III ESEA (July 31, 1972)

[10]The concept "areas of permissible negotiation" is borrowed from N. Masters, et. al. State Politics and the Public Schools. New York, Knopf, 1964. It is redefined for this paper.

[11]During these negotiations, the Investigator was in the role of observer and took verbatim notes.

[12]R. Havelock, Innovations in Education: Strategies and Tactics. Michigan: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 1971.

[13]Ibid., p. 14